

Message Text

SECRET

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70

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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S E C R E T AMMAN 0297

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, JO, US

SUBJ: SAUDI ASSISTANCE TO JORDAN

1. IN COVERSATION WITH KING EVENING JANUARY 14 HE PROVIDED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON JORDANIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE INTERESTS. HE NOTED THAT BULK OF PRESENT CHECK FOR \$51M WOULD GO TO AIR FORCE. HE MENTIONED FIGURE OF 15M JD (ABOUT \$45M). HE WAS NOT SURE WHAT FUNDS WOULD FOR, BUT INCLUDED AIRCRAFT AND AIR BASE CONSTRUCTION. (THIS CONTRASTS MARKEDLY WITH PRIOR REPORTS WE HAVE HAD AND WITH ALSO WHAT IS APPARENTLY ARMY DETERMINATION TO SPEND ONLY ABOUT ONE-QUARTER OF MONEY ON AIR FORCE).

2. KING ALSO MADE SPECIAL REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON CAPABILITY OF A-4 SKYHAWK AIRCRAFT. HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE FACTUAL INFORMATION ON CAPABILITIES OF VARIOUS MODELS AVAILABLE AND VULNERABILITIES. DEFENSE ATTACHE PREPARING CABLE TO STATE AND DEFENSE SUGGESTING SMALL BRIEFING TEAM BE SENT HERE ASAP.

3. KING THEN MENTIONED THAT SALE OF HAWKER HUNTERS TO IRAQ IS COMPLETELY OFF. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, THERE IS NO IRAQI INTEREST IN PURCHASE. WHILE PLANES ARE BEING "MOTH-BALLED" EXCEPT FOR SIX WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO BE USED, KING HOPES TO FIND ANOTHER BUYER. HE MAY APPROACH SULTAN QABOOS OF OMAN AND WOULD BE PREPARED

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TO PROVIDE AIRCRAFT AT EXTREMELY REASONABLE PRICE RECOGNIZING

HE HAS A WASTING ASSET ON HIS HANDS.
ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE LEBANON. HE ASKED IF
WE HAD ANY IDEAS OF POSSIBLE AREAS WHERE HE COULD
SELL AIRCRAFT. HE OF COURSE RULES OUT SOUTH AFRICA.
IF DEPARTMENT OR DEFENSE HAS ANY SUGGESTIONS, HE WOULD
BE GRATEFUL FOR THEM. HE WOULD LIKE TO REALIZE SOMETHING
ON SALE, BUT PRICE NOW SEEMS TO BE LESS OF A PROBLEM.
AS STATED CHILE ONCE WAS INTERESTED, BUT NOW HAS NO FUNDS.
HAWKER SIDLEY COMPANY IN UK HAS OFFERED HIM FIFTY
THOUSAND POUNDS EACH FOR AIRCRAFT WHICH HE KNOWS THEY
WILL THEN TURN AROUND AND SELL TWO OR THREE TIMES THE
PRICE. HE SEEMS TO BE AGAINST THIS, ALMOST ON
PRINCIPLE, BECAUSE OF UK ATTITUDE ON EARLIER ATTEMPTS
TO SELL AIRCRAFT.
PICKERING

SECRET

NNN

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